

# ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the: World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council  
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association  
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

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No. 45

Twenty-fourth Year

November 29th, 1957

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## BELGIUM

### Plans Announced for Ecumenical Pavilion

(Brussels) - With the opening of the Brussels Universal and International Exhibition less than five months away, preparations for the Ecumenical Pavilion are moving into their final stages, according to Reformed Pastor Pieter Fagel, leader of the small group of Belgian Protestants which has spearheaded the project.

The focal point of ecumenical interest at the Exhibition will be a "small but fine" modern building of aluminium and steel. Praised by the Exhibition's chief architect as one of the best designs in the huge Exhibition, the pavilion is the work of Mr. Paul Calame, and will use materials from most of the countries of Western Europe. The pavilion will stand on an 11,000 square feet plot in the centre of the 500-acre grounds, near the 462-foot high "Atomium", symbol of the Exhibition. The Exhibition, expected to draw more than thirty million people, opens on April 17 and closes on October 19.

In the building's circular chapel, designed to be used by various denominations, short daily noon hour and evensong services will be held during the Exhibition. On Sundays services will be held in the four official languages of the Exhibition - German, French, English and Dutch. An ecumenical exhibit, showing the work of the church around the world, is being planned by Mr. Robert Kurtz, of Zurich, Switzerland.

At the close of the Exhibition, plans call for moving the pavilion to a permanent site near Brussels where it will be used as an ecumenical centre - the only one in the country.

The pavilion project was originally started by leaders of the tiny Protestant Church in Belgium. "There are only 75,000 Protestants in a country with

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a population of 8,500,000.) Only during the last few months has it begun to catch the interest of Protestants around the world. During the past summer, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches commended the pavilion as "worthy of support". A group of American church people have set up a laymen's committee which hopes to raise a considerable sum; the United Bible Societies have pledged \$10,000; churches in Belgium are raising \$20,000; a gift of nearly \$23,000 from churches in Germany meant that construction on the pavilion could begin last May; last month the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Netherlands voted to help the project. Other gifts are expected from Great Britain, New Zealand and Switzerland.

E.P.S., Geneva

#### UNITED KINGDOM

#### British Churches Oppose Change in Central African Constitution

The International Department of the British Council of Churches has criticised a proposal to alter the system of electing Africans to the assembly of the Central African Federation.

The measure, which came before the British parliament this week, provides for increasing the number of members in the assembly from 35 to 59. It was passed by one vote in the Central African Federation's parliament, but was opposed by the African Affairs Board, the body of 3 Africans and 3 Europeans set up under the constitution to safeguard African interests. The board says the proposal reduces the parliamentary influence of Africans in what was envisaged as an inter-racial partnership. As a final decision would affect the constitution, it must be approved by the British parliament.

The International Department of the British Council of Churches, which also represents the Conference of British Missionary Societies, declares that the churches had urged African Christians to accept the Federation proposals on the understanding that everything would be done to improve race relations. Recognising that "there are a number of positive provisions in the bill which look forward to the ultimate goal of the abolition of communal representation, a goal which has its full support", the International Department goes on to say that "genuine non-racial representation requires a certain level of inter-racial understanding and confidence", and that "it cannot be claimed that this has yet been achieved". It says evidence received on this point, particularly from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, is virtually unanimous.

According to the International Department, "rightly or wrongly, the African understanding was that there would be no alteration in the constitutional provisions before 1960. If the British Parliament accepts such variation now, the confidence of the Africans will be still further undermined. The approval of the bill at this juncture, in the Department's view, cannot but have lasting consequences in the further deterioration of race relationships. Such real benefits as the bill is designed to secure could be provided for at the time of the review of the constitution."

In March, 1953, when Central African Federation was still under consideration, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the then Moderator of the Church of Scotland and the then Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council in the United Kingdom, wrote an open letter to "The Times", which said that "the scheme must be judged by whether or not it may be expected to promote the growth of mutual trust and good will between the racial groups living in Central Africa, on which alone a genuine multi-racial society can be built."

E.P.S., Geneva







COLOMBIAEvangelicals Report Decrease in Acts of Violence

(Bogota) - The Evangelical Confederation of Colombia has reported "a decrease in acts of violence or discrimination against Protestants" in the period from June to September. According to the official bulletin of the organisation, "it is to be hoped that this trend will continue in all the country".

The bulletin pointed out that on September 30 Interior Minister Jose Maria Villareal pledged that the government, "faithful to its democratic principles, will do everything in its power to restore constitutional rights to all Colombians". (See EPS Nos. 36 and 39.) The bulletin added that Protestant work in Colombia continues to be handicapped, pointing out that no Protestant schools are permitted in the so-called Mission Territories, which make up two-thirds of the area of Colombia; in non-mission territory, many Protestant schools remain closed, leaving Protestant children without formal education unless they are willing to attend government schools and take part in Roman Catholic religious ceremonies; Protestants are not allowed to "make public demonstrations of their faith through radio broadcasts or public meetings".

The Confederation is made up of fourteen Protestant groups.

E.P.S., Geneva

HUNGARYTomb of Early Christian Bishop Found

(Budapest) - A fourth-century tomb of a Christian bishop has been unearthed in the small town of Szony, about sixty miles northwest of Budapest.

The tomb of the bishop, along with several others, was discovered when a site was being excavated for a new oil refinery. Experts reported finding a silver-mounted crozier and various liturgical vessels of bronze and glass in the bishop's grave.

E.P.S., Geneva

HUNGARYChurchmen Reject Bishop Bereczky's Resignation

(Budapest) - The annual assembly of the Danubian District of the Hungarian Reformed Church has voted unanimously against accepting the resignation of Dr. Albert Bereczky from the office of bishop.

Bishop Bereczky, 65, had asked the assembly to accept his resignation because of ill health. Originally, he had resigned his office after the revolution last October. Consideration of the resignation has been pending.

In poor health for years, Bishop Bereczky suffered a stroke at Emden, Germany, last August, while attending a meeting of the World Presbyterian Alliance.

Bishop Bereczky reported on developments within the Reformed Church since the last Assembly in 1955. He said he regretted that the World Council of Churches had "interfered" with the affairs of the Reformed Church "both at Galyatető and afterwards". (The Central Committee of the WCC met in Galyatető, Hungary, in the summer of 1956.) However, Bishop Bereczky continued, despite attempts by outside churches to interfere with its affairs, the Hungarian Church still desires to "strengthen its ties" with the World Council.

Mr. Janos Horvath, president of the State Office for Church Affairs, addressed the Assembly.

E.P.S., Geneva







NEW ZEALANDPresbyterians Concerned About Mormon Mission Activities

(Christchurch) - The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand is drawing up a statement that will set forth "in simple terms the issues at stake for the guidance of Presbyterians confronted by Mormon missionaries".

Church officials have reported that many young Mormon missionaries are at work in New Zealand, and that "their influence will grow with the opening of their big new temple at Hamilton". A coeducational college that will accommodate 820 students, being built by the Mormons near Hamilton, is almost ready. Costing more than £3,000,000, the buildings are being paid for by United States Mormons and built by New Zealand volunteers, most of them Maoris. A speaker in the New Zealand Presbyterian Assembly said that the Mormon Church is planning to send 500 missionaries to New Zealand in the near future, half of them trained in the Maori language. (A report made in 1951 said that there were 13,000 Mormon adherents in New Zealand, most of them Maoris, and that 100 American Mormon missionaries were active in New Zealand.)

E.P.S., Geneva

YUGOSLAVIABan Lifted on Journal of Moscow Patriarchate

(Belgrade) - The Yugoslav government has lifted a five-year-old ban on the importation and distribution of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, official organ of the Russian Orthodox Church.

It was reported in Yugoslavia that the ban was lifted at the request of Patriarch Alexius, supreme head of the Russian Church, who visited Yugoslavia in October as head of a twelve-man delegation of Russian churchmen.

The ban on the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate was imposed in 1952, after Russian church leaders attacked President Tito and Yugoslavia during the Cominform dispute between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED STATES"Catholic World" Speaks on Oberlin

(New York) - Progress towards reunion of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism at the September Oberlin conference on "The Nature of the Unity We Seek" was "so slight in view of the vastness of the schism, as to be almost imperceptible", according to Father John B. Sheerin, writing in the November issue of "The Catholic World".

Father Sheerin, an unofficial Catholic observer at the conference (see EPS No. 35), cited the sincerity of the delegates and the return to Biblical theology as hopeful signs. He described the conference as an attempt "to discover what kind of unity Christ wanted, mere fellowship or a uniform creed or even a compact unity of faith, sacraments and hierarchy. Many delegates claimed that Christ established a unified visible structure that has been shattered. The Catholic position, of course, is that the essential, visible structural unity has not and cannot be broken."

Protestants will not come closer to Catholicism, Father Sheerin writes, "until we Catholics stop talking about the visible organisation of the Church as we might talk about a business organisation".

Father Sheerin commented that he was impressed by the sincerity of the delegates; bewildered by the diversity of beliefs expressed; and felt that sin was regarded by the delegates as a "remote and slightly romantic abstraction".

E.P.S., Geneva







INDIAChurch-YMCA Relations Studied

(Bombay) - In an effort to find "not coexistence but fellowship", fifty-three representatives of churches and YMCAs met this month in Bombay and recommended that attempts be made to link more YMCA members with their churches and to remove misunderstandings in the churches about the YMCA.

The conference, in its efforts to clarify relationships between the YMCA and the churches, noted that in its Centennial Declaration of 1955, the YMCA stated that "as an interdenominational and interconfessional fellowship within the Church Universal, the YMCA should constantly seek to encourage its members to accept responsibilities of church membership and to participate actively in the life and work of their particular churches".

In India, it was reported, a high percentage of associate members in the YMCAs are non-Christian. Recognising that this creates genuine difficulties, the group pointed out that it also presents a unique opportunity for the witness of Christian members.

In his concluding address, the Rev. Fred Franklin, religious work secretary of the Council of YMCAs of India and Ceylon, said: "We have through this conference come a little way toward creating a Church-YMCA fusion. Where there is no fusion, there will be confusion. God help us to be united."

Also present for the conference were fraternal delegates from the YWCA, the Student Christian Movement and the National Christian Councils of India and Ceylon.  
E.P.S., Geneva

World Circulation of Scriptures Nears 27 Million

The total world circulation of the Bible, the Old and New Testaments and portions of the Scriptures reached 26,379,142 in December, 1956, according to a twelve-page report issued this month by the Rev. Frank W. Price, director of the Missionary Research Library maintained by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. The figure is almost one million more than 1955, and three million more than 1954.

"At the end of 1956", Dr. Price reported, "at least one whole book of the Bible had been published in 1,109 languages, seventeen more than the year before". He pointed out that the historical list of 1,109 included many languages now obsolete, such as certain Chinese dialects, but that the number of languages in which some part of the Bible has been circulated in the last twenty-five years "is probably between 600 and 700".

During 1956 the complete Bible was published for the first time in three new languages - Bemba (Northern Rhodesia), Nimbi Ijo (Nigeria) and Morovo (Solomon Islands) - and the entire New Testament became available in eight new languages, including the North American Indian Navajo.

Dr. Price's report shows that the first five countries in the sale of complete Bibles are the United States, Germany, England and Wales, South Africa and Brazil.

The NCC official said that the fact that the Bible continues to be published, circulated and studied in Communist China is underlined by the following figures: "Since 1949, 171,278 complete Bibles, 170,493 New Testaments and 3,199,282 portions of the Bible have been distributed, and forty-three editions printed from old plates already in the country," Dr. Price said. In addition, seven Bible Houses are maintained in major Chinese cities.







Enough Scriptures will be produced in Hungary this year to meet the needs of the churches and new communicants, according to Mr. Olivier Béguin, general secretary of the United Bible Societies, just back from a visit to Hungary. He reported that as a result of conversations with government and church leaders, earlier arrangements to produce 100,000 Bibles were also confirmed.

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A Study Conference on Bible Illustration will be held in Edinburgh in the summer of 1959, the third jubilee of the National Bible Society of Scotland. At the same time, an exhibit showing the development of Bible illustration will be open to the public during the Edinburgh Festival.

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The Rev. Young Bin Im, general secretary of the Korean Bible Society, visited Australia and New Zealand last month to stress the world-wide demand for more Scriptures and the urgent need of financial support of Bible Society work if production is to keep up with it.

E.P.S., Geneva

#### GERMANY

#### Church News From the German Democratic Republic

(Berlin) - The promised church statements of opinion on the "Maercker case" have now been made. Dean Maercker was recently arrested by the District Public Prosecutor's Office of Schwerin, in East Germany, because he had refused Christian burial to a girl who had taken part in the youth dedication ceremonies, and assigned to her a grave by the churchyard wall (see EPS No. 42).

With regard to the arrested Dean's attitude, the Mecklenburg High Consistory in Schwerin has explained that the Dean had made use of the provision in the Church Rules of Conduct, that state that in certain cases it is a matter for the spiritual judgment of the competent clergyman whether or not the ministrations of the Church shall be given. The High Consistory added that the Dean was wrong in not allowing the parents of the dead girl to choose her burial place.

\* \*

Various East German publications are continuing their accusations against Kurt Grünbaum and Dr. Siegfried Klewitz, the two Magdeburg church leaders who are under arrest. They are charged with "unauthorised money transactions" in connection with the currency exchange in the German Democratic Republic. The Austrian church bulletin, "Amt und Gemeinde", which is published by the Bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburgian Confession in Austria, writes: "It should not be forgotten that the Hungarian Bishop Lajos Ordass was sentenced on very similar grounds in 1948, and that it was eight years before the Hungarian State declared him innocent".

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The Dresden Cross Choir, widely known abroad, has had to cancel a series of recitals in West Germany and Berlin because it could not obtain an exit permit.

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The Dean of the Comenius Faculty in Prague, Professor Josef Hromadka, has visited Greifswald and Rostock as a guest lecturer. In the packed lecture-hall of the Greifswald Faculty of Theology, he spoke on "The Theological Approach to Modern Problems".

E.P.S., Geneva







GERMANYA "Conspiracy of Silence"?

(Düsseldorf) - Church leaders in Germany are expressing their concern at the growing indifference of the general public toward the plight of refugees within the country, especially the German "late transferees" from Poland, who are arriving in large numbers.

A resolution to Bishop Otto Dibelius, president of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), from a working committee of church associations concerned with refugee aid, states that "for a number of reasons the problems of refugees, expellees and transferees are being hushed up, and our churches and congregations should no longer accept complicity in this". Church authorities were asked to intensify their efforts to promote the spiritual and material well-being of the refugees and their integration into German life.

At the same time, the Protestant news service "Kirche in der Zeit" in Düsseldorf has published a public appeal, entitled "Conspiracy of Silence", drawing attention to the fact that in four and a half years only half the homes needed for refugees have been built. At the end of the year, the service said, approximately 200,000 refugees will be living in cellars, dormitories, huts and camps - often four or five families to a room - in the province of North Rhine-Westphalia alone. In addition, the news service added, families are being divided, because men are working in the industrial zone while women and children are housed in a former concentration camp. During the past month, reports say, another 20,000 refugees have come to West Germany from the German Democratic Republic.

E.P.S., Geneva

In brief

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand has decided to join other Protestant groups in inviting evangelist Billy Graham to conduct a crusade in New Zealand in 1959. Dr. Graham has already accepted an invitation to hold a campaign in Australia in the same year.

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The Very Rev. Anthony Bloom, vicar of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal church in London, has been made the Bishop of Sergievo and Vicar of the Exarch of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in Western Europe, by decree of the Patriarch Alexius of Moscow and All Russia and of the Holy Synod.

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The Relief Department of the Protestant Church in the Rhineland has declared 1958 as a "year of ecumenical service", in an effort to develop an understanding of needs throughout the world.

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Dutch Protestant churches have decided to hold their "Kirchentag" assemblies every two years, with the next after 1958 set for 1960. Meanwhile, local church assembly committees are continuing their study groups, and 12,000 copies of the assembly publication, "God With Us", have been sold in the congregations. In the Netherlands, unlike Germany where one giant Church Day rally is held, small rallies are held in local churches throughout the country.

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The Westphalian Provincial Synod has set up a permanent missionary foundation which will make it possible for two young theologians from Asia and Africa to study at a German university. One of the places will go regularly to the Batak Church in Sumatra.

\* \*







A 14-by-8 foot sign has been erected on the grounds of St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Capetown, South Africa, reading: "This cathedral is open to welcome all men and women of all races to all services at all times". The sign was put up after supporters of the South African government's apartheid policies had removed a smaller similarly-worded notice from the cathedral steps. The new sign appeared about two weeks after the Most Rev. Joost de Blank was enthroned in the cathedral as Anglican Archbishop of Capetown.

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An inquiry into the role of religion in American life will be made by the Fund for the Republic, the well-known American foundation. The study will deal with relations between Church and State, the role of religion in public life and religious dissent. Coordinating the project will be Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, vice-president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, and Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., professor of theology at Woodstock College in Maryland.

\* \*

Mr. Ernest A. Andrews arrived in Geneva on November 25 to begin a one-year appointment as associate secretary in the Department on the Laity of the World Council of Churches, on loan from the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church U.S. He has been on the staff of the board's Division of Men's Work. Mr. Andrews has studied at the University of Chattanooga and King College. He has also attended his church's Training School for Lay Workers in Richmond, Virginia, specialising in Christian education.

E.P.S., Geneva



